

## Message Text

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SUBJECT: OASGA MEDIA REACTION- WASHINGTON POST STORY

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY KAREN DEYOUNG CAPTIONED HUMAN RIGHTS MOTION PASSES, UNDERLINES DIVISIONS IN OAS APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON POST ON JUNE 23.

QUOTE: IN A WEEK OF PUBLIC FRANKNESS ON THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AIRED THEIR GRIEVANCES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN TERMS THAT LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IS MORE PROFOUNDLY AND EMOTIONALLY DIVIDED OVER THIS ISSUE THAN OVER ANY OTHER.

NEVERTHELESS, THE UNITED STATES WAS ABLE TO MUSTER ENOUGH VOTES TODAY TO HAVE PASSED A STRONGLY WORDED RESOLUTION BINDING OAS MEMBERS TO PRESERVE HUMAN DIGNITY AND FREEDOM.

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THIS YEAR'S 8 DAY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH WOUND UP WORK HERE TODAY, SAW VENEZUELA TAKE ON LATIN AMERICA'S RIGHTIST MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AND BECOME THE SELF-APPOINTED HUMAN-RIGHTS STANDARD-BEARER.

THE UNITED STATES FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND IN WHAT ONE

LONG-TIME OAS OBSERVER SAW AS "THE FIRST TIME U.S. REPRESENTATIVES HAVE TAKEN A STRONG STAND ON ANYTHING HERE THAT WAS BOTH POSITIVE AND PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY CONSISTENT."

EQUALLY CONSISTENT IN THEIR OPPOSITION WERE THE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS OF ARGENTINA -- WHICH ARGUED THAT AN INSISTENCE ON HUMAN-RIGHTS GUARANTEES IS AN "OBSOLETE LIBERAL PHILOSOPHY" FOR COUNTRIES THREATENED BY TERRORIST SUBVERSION -- AND URUGUAY, WHICH VIRTUALLY ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES OF ORCHESTRATING THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN-RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES.

THEY WERE JOINED BY CHILE, WHICH DESCRIBED ITS PLEDGE TO FIGHT COMMUNIST SUBVERSION AS "WRITTEN IN BLOOD," AND DENOUNCED CRITICISM BY SUCH COUNTRIES AS VENEZUELA, WHICH "DON'T HAVE THE GUTS TO STAND UP AND SPEAK" ABOUT RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN LEFTIST COUNTRIES SUCH AS CUBA.

IN TERMS OF CONCESSIONS, THE MEETING WAS A DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF, AND POSITIONS BECAME MORE UNYIELDING AS THE WEEK WENT ON.

"WE SAID IT YESTERDAY, WE SAY IT TODAY AND YOU MAY BE SURE, SIR, THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO SAY IT IN THE FUTURE," VENEZUELAN OAS AMBASSADOR JOSE MARIA MACHIN TOLD  
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CHILEAN SPOKESMAN SERGIO DIEZ IN ONE HEATED EXCHANGE.  
"YOU CAN ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT AND THE HAPPINESS OF ALL MEN ... ONLY WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM."

VENEZUELA AND THE UNITED STATES, WITH SUPPORT FROM COSTA RICA AND THE CARIBBEAN NATIONS, MANAGED TO HAMMER THROUGH A RESOLUTION STRENGTHENING THE OAS INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION AND BINDING EACH MEMBER TO AN AFFIRMATION THAT "THERE ARE NO CIRCUMSTANCES THAT JUSTIFY TORTURE, SUMMARY EXECUTION OR PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL CONTRARY TO LAW."

FOURTEEN COUNTRIES VOTED FOR THE U.S. SPONSORED PROPOSAL, EIGHT ABSTAINED AND THREE WERE ABSENT. A SIMPLE MAJORITY, 13 VOTES WAS NEEDED FOR PASSAGE.

WON WITH THE SUPPORT OF COUNTRIES INCLUDING PANAMA, MEXICO, PERU AND ECUADOR, THE HUMAN-RIGHTS RESOLUTION MARKS A NEW PHASE IN U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS, FOLLOWING SEVERAL YEARS OF ACRIMONY OVER ECONOMIC ISSUES.

WHILE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS REMAIN, THIS IS ONE AREA IN

WHICH MANY LATINS HAVE FOUND THAT THERE IS SOMETHING ON WHICH THEY CAN AGREE WITH THEIR BIG NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH. THE ISSUE PUTS THEM ON EQUAL FOOTING, WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING LABELED "U.S. COLONIES."

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DOMINATION OF NEARLY EVERY OAS DEBATE THIS YEAR IS ALSO A STRONG INDICATION THAT MANY LATIN NATIONS ARE EVERY BIT AS CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. AT THE OAS SESSION TWO YEARS AGO, THE SUBJECT WAS BARELY MENTIONED. LAST YEAR, THE CONTROVERSY HAD JUST BEGUN.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT THE OAS LINEUP HAS CHANGED  
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FROM ONE OF ALLIANCES TO ONE OF ISSUES CAME IN A DISCUSSION OF CUBA, WHICH THE ORGANIZATION VOTED TO EXPEL FROM ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN 1964. THREE YEARS AGO ANTI-CASTRO SENTIMENT WAS STILL THE OPERATIVE FORCE IN THE ORGANIZATION, AND THE MAJORITY VOTED TO COMPILE A REPORT ON CUBAN HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

THIS YEAR A NEW MAJORITY, LED BY SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC NATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN, WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT, REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE REPORT ON THE GROUND THAT "WE CAN'T PASS JUDGMENT ON A COUNTRY THAT IS NOT ALLOWED TO BE A PARTICIPATING OAS MEMBER."

U.S. DELEGATE ROBERT WHITE VOTED FOR RECOGNITION OF THE REPORT BECAUSE "NO COUNTRY COULD ESCAPE SCRUTINY," BUT HE SAID THAT "THE REAL QUESTION" IS WHETHER CUBA SHOULD BE READMITTED.

THE MILITARISTS CAME TO GRENADA ARMED WITH EVIDENCE OF COMMUNIST CONSPIRACIES AND TERRORISM. APPARENTLY INTENDING TO TAKE THEIR LUMPS ON SOME HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, THEY DEMANDED OAS RECOGNITION OF THEIR POINT OF VIEW -- THAT SOME REPRESSIONS ARE NECESSARY TO COMBAT TERRORISM.

"TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE INTIMATELY RELATED," CHILE'S DIEZ ARGUED. "THIS IS NOT A CHILD'S GAME --WHO DO YOU LOVE BEST, YOUR MOTHER OR YOUR FATHER? WHICH PROBLEM IS WORSE? THEY ARE BOTH VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS."

WHILE THE ASSEMBLY PASSED A UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING TERRORISM, HOWEVER, IT ROUNDLY DEFEATED ALL ATTEMPTS TO TIE TERRORISM TO HUMAN RIGHTS.  
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"TERRORISM IS INDEED THE SCOURGE OF OUR AGE," U.S. AMBASSADOR GALE MCGEE SAID. "BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT

HUMAN RIGHTS SUFFER WHEN A STATE UNDER ATTACK LASHES BACK BLINDLY, INJURING INNOCENT AND GUILTY ALIKE. AND HERE IS THE DIFFERENCE: TERRORISM IS A CRIME AGAINST THE STATE. THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS A CRIME COMMITTED BY THE STATE AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL."

THE FOCUS OF THE MOST ACRIMONIOUS DEBATES WAS THE GROUP'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, A 17-YEAR OLD CREATION THAT FOR MANY YEARS FOCUSED ITS INVESTIGATIONS TO CUBA AND TO PERFUNCTORY GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT HEMISPHERIC RIGHTS. WHEN IT BECAME CRITICAL OF ACTIVE MEMBERS, HOWEVER, THE COMMISSION HAS COME UNDER FIRE THIS YEAR.

THE COMMISSION PRESENTED ITS THIRD REPORT ON CHILE, A COUNTRY THAT HAS TAKEN MOST OF THE HUMAN-RIGHTS FLAK. WHILE NOTING THAT THE NUMBER OF ACCUSATIONS OF MURDER AND ARREST AGAINST CHILE'S MILITARY JUNTA HAS DECLINED, THE COMMISSION SAID THAT IN THE PAST YEAR "THE RATE OF DISAPPEARANCES AMONG INDIVIDUALS ALREADY IN PRISON HAS INCREASED."

CRITICISM OF THE COMMISSION IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE, BECAUSE IT IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION OF ARGENTINA. AND URUGUAY HAS CHARGED THAT AN UNRELEASED REPORT ON ITS MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS BASED "ON DENUNCIATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS OF SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATIONS."

IN A TWO-HOUR SPEECH, URUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR ALVARO ALVAREZ ACCUSED THE COMMISSION OF COMPILING A "DOSSIER," INCLUDING LETTERS FROM U.S. CONGRESSMEN, AND CHARGED THAT THE COMMISSION WORKED HAND-IN-GLOVE WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

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TO SUPPORT THAT CONTENTION, ALVAREZ SAID THAT THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO PREPARE A REPORT ON URUGUAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER HEARINGS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND BARELY PRECEDING A CARTER ADMINISTRATION CUTOFF OF MILITARY AID TO HIS COUNTRY.

POUNDING THE TABLE FOR EMPHASIS, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN ANDRES AGUILAR TOLD ALVAREZ THAT "ANYONE LISTENING TO YOU MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THE PROBLEMS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ARE IN THE COMMISSION, THAT THE COMMISSION IS NOT ADEQUATE TO ITS TASK AND THAT A REORDERING OF THE COMMISSION MIGHT MAKE THE PROBLEMS DISAPPEAR.

"THE PROBLEM," AGUILAR SAID, "LIES IN THE FACT THAT THERE IS A CONSTANT VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THIS

CONTINENT." UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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